

The Seal of an Official or an Official Seal? The Use of Court Seals in Old Babylonian Susa and Haft Tepe

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This is an in-depth study of two exceptional seals impressed on tablets from late Sikkalmah-early Kidinuid Susa and Haft Tepe. Both seals have exceptionally long inscriptions in Akkadian, mentioning Išme-karāb and Inšušinak, respectively, followed by penalty and curse clauses resembling those used in the economic and legal texts and royal charters of Sikkalmah Susa. Analysis of the inscriptions implies that both seals must have been official seals, used by legal bodies during appeals to the supreme court. The Išme-karāb sealing, which mentions the deities Išme-karāb, escort of the dead to the underworld, and Inšušinak, judge of the dead, evokes divine judgement. The Inšušinak seal has a more secular and “national” character, invoking in the curse formula four important Elamite rulers, including the illustrious Šilhaha.

INTRODUCTION

A large and intriguing seal is impressed on *MDP* 23 321-2 (BK 1723), a large so-called “Quasi-Hüllentafel” recording the contestation of an inheritance in late Sikkalmah Susa. The same seal is also found at Haft Tepe, where it is impressed on HT 21 (Herrero and Glassner 1993: no. 206 = Negahban 1991: no. 386), a fragment of a legal document, most probably a royal donation by Tepti-ahar according to Glassner (1991: 111), and HTs 24, HTs 295, and HTs 296 (Negahban 1991: nos. 387, 388, and 389), three fragmentary seal impressions. Both its legend, a fifteen-line inscription in Akkadian, and its presentation scene, not to mention the size of the cylinder seal, are absolutely exceptional.

Earlier attempts to interpret the inscription were undertaken by Scheil (*MDP* 23: 188) and Amiet (1973: 37–38) on the basis of the Susa tablet and by Glassner (1991: 122) on the basis of the Haft Tepe impressions. None of these scholars, however, was able to present a complete and coherent transcription and translation of the seal legend, due to incomplete information. Recently, I was able to collate the Susa tablet at the National Museum of Iran, which, by comparison with the photographs of HT 21 and HTs 24 published in Negahban 1991 (Pl. 47, nos. 386 and 387), resulted in a new and nearly complete reading of the seal legend. This new reading has enabled me to reinterpret the inscription, which, in combination with the analysis of the texts on which the seal was impressed, has led to a new hypothesis on the meaning and function of this particular seal, which is supported by the impressions of a similar seal on two other Susa tablets: *MDP* 23 242 (BK 875), a verdict, and 325 (BK 1339), a litigation.¹

1. I wish to thank Dr. Dariush Akbarzadeh and Mrs. Simin Piran from the Inscriptions Department at the National Museum of Iran for their most hospitable welcome during my stays in Tehran to study the Susa tablets, as well as for their permission to publish the photographs of the seals. The photographs were taken by Erik Smekens, who also made the drawings of the seals and to whom I am most grateful for his impeccable work.

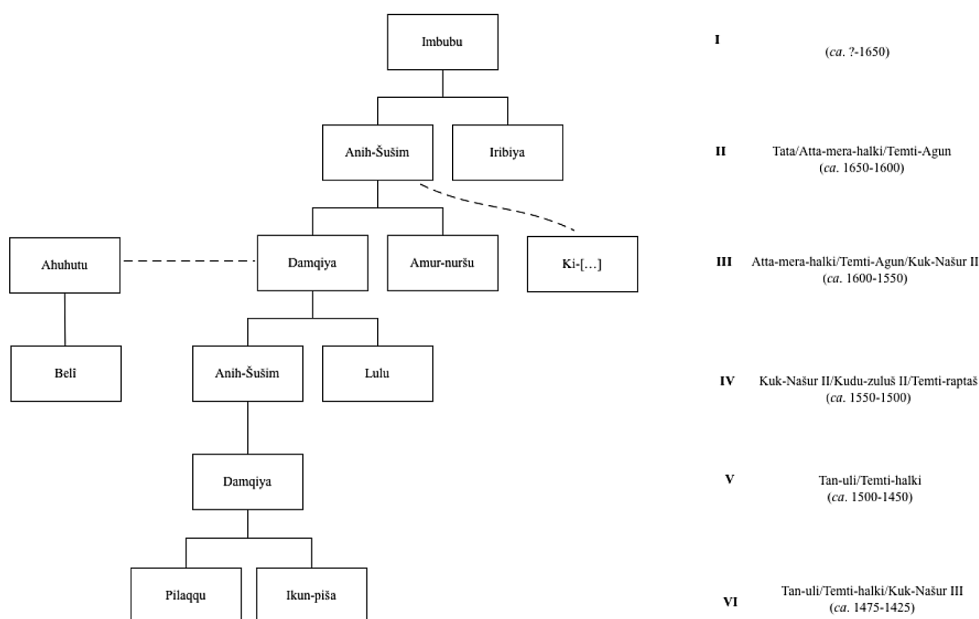


Fig. 1. Family tree of the Anih-Šušim family with tentative dating.

REINTERPRETING THE SEAL IMPRESSIONS ON *MDP* 23 321-2 (BK 1723)

The seal under consideration is impressed on the reverse, lower edge, and left edge of *MDP* 23 321-2, a large so-called “Quasi-Hüllentafel” dealing with the charges Anih-Šušim and Lûlu, sons of Damqiya, pressed against Belî, son of Ahuhutu, concerning the possessions Belî had inherited from his father Ahuhutu, who had been adopted as a brother by Damqiya.

The tablet bears no date, but can be dated indirectly on the basis of the persons mentioned. Indeed, the persons involved belong to a family well known to us from other Susa texts (see De Meyer 1961 and Vallat 2000: 12–13). Six generations of this family are documented, five of which can be dated approximately on the basis of the rulers mentioned in the oaths of the texts (Fig. 1). The protagonists in *MDP* 23 321-2, Anih-Šušim, Lûlu, and Belî, belong to the fourth generation, active during the reign of Temti-raptaš,² to be dated ca. 1550–1500 BCE, which is the latter part of the so-called Sukkalmah period.³ This dating is supported by the presence of three witnesses, Šilli-Ilabrat, the *ippu*,⁴ Šulanû, and the scribe Inšušinak-abi,⁵

2. Temti-raptaš is twice attested as šar Šušim “king of Susa” (*MDP* 22 10: 5 and 133: 5). He is mentioned seven times together with Kuter-Šilhaha, first Sukkal and later Sukkalmah (*MDP* 22 10: 4, 177: rev. 4', 133: 4; 23 169: 55, 212: rev. 8', 213: rev. 11'', and 214: rev. 2') and five times together with Kudu-zuluš (*MDP* 22 8: 11, 116: rev. 4'; 23 183: rev. 4'; 24: 341: 10 and 393: 2), probably to be identified with Kudu-zuluš II, who can be linked to Kuk-Našur II, a contemporary of Ammišaduqa of Babylon (1550–1530 BCE). See Steve, Vallat, and Gasche 2002: 381–82.

3. All dates mentioned in this article follow the Short Chronology as stated in Gasche, Armstrong, Cole, and Gruzadyan 1998.

4. See *ElW* II sub *ip-pu*, “aE Titel eines elamischen Würdenträgers.”

5. Respectively the fourth, fourteenth, and twenty-fourth (and last) witness in *MDP* 23 321-2.

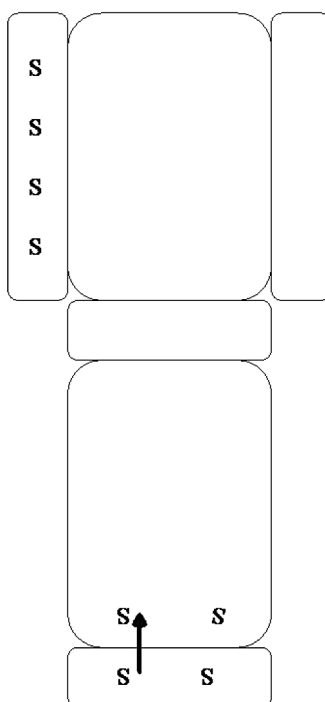


Fig. 2. Location of the seal impressions on *MDP* 23 321-2.

who also witnessed *MDP* 23 315, a legal document in which Abi-ili approaches Temti-raptaš regarding linen he held in pledge, as already noted by Glassner (1991: 123).

In total, the seal is impressed eight times on this tablet: twice on the reverse at the bottom, under the end of the text, twice on the upper edge, and four times on the left edge. The impression on the left side of the upper edge continues on the left side of the reverse (Fig. 2). In none of these cases is the seal completely impressed, but on the basis of these eight partial impressions, a composite sketch of the seal can be made.

This composite sketch shows that the seal consists of a fifteen-line inscription in Akkadian and a presentation scene featuring at the left a deity, standing on a platform shaped like a building with a gate in the middle, facing another deity on a smaller scale, who is holding the rod and ring and sitting on a snake throne placed on a platform, supported by two snakes entwined around a stake. At the bottom, the stake is held by two naked heroes kneeling symmetrically on mountains (Figs. 3 and 4).

First of all, I must remark that the use of cylinder seals in the mid and latter parts of the Sikkalmah period is rather rare in Susa. On most of the economic and legal texts from this period, the parties involved impress their fingernail (Akk. *šuprum*). Since these marks are not very distinct from each other, a by-script *šupur* PN, “fingernail of PN,” or simply *šupuršu(nu)*, “his/their fingernail(s),” is often added. So the mere fact that a cylinder seal is impressed on this tablet is uncommon.

Moreover, both the inscription and presentation scene on this cylinder seal are exceptional.



Fig. 3. Composite sketch of the seal impressed on *MDP* 23 321-2. Drawing by Erik Smekens. Scale 150%.

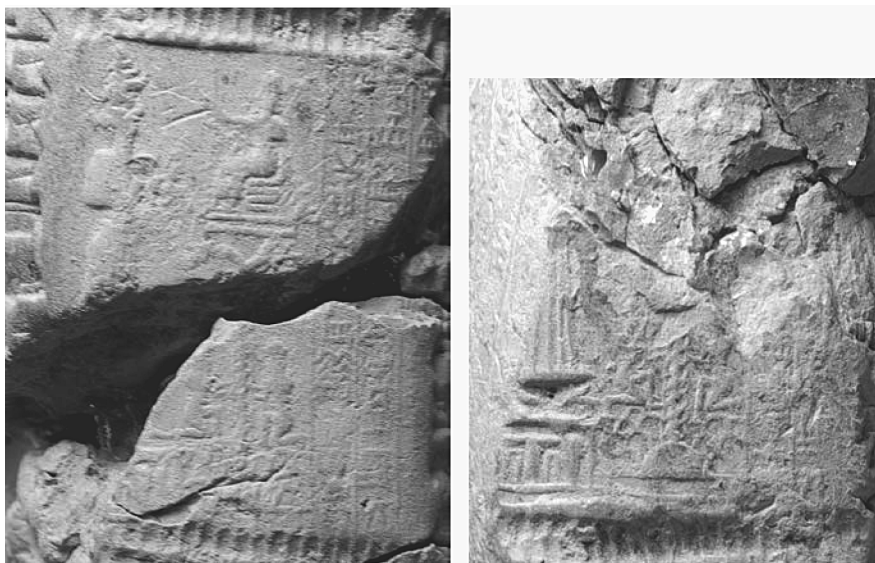


Fig. 4. Photographs of presentation scene of the seal impressed on *MDP* 23 321-2. Photographs by Erik Smekens. Scale 150%.

SEAL 1—THE INSCRIPTION

The first three lines are only partly preserved on the Susa tablet, but can be completed thanks to the photographs of HT 21 and HTs 24 from Haft Tepe, published in Negahban 1991 (Pl. 47, nos. 386 and 387).

Transcription

1. ^diš-me-^rka¹-[ra-ab]
2. lugal ^{ru}[šu-šī-im]
3. ú.^rdu₄-am i-ze-er-ma¹
4. ^ra¹-na ^{ru}šu-šī-im
5. ki-^rma¹ ad-da-la-ti-^ršu¹
6. ú-^rše¹-šī
7. ku-nu-uk-ú-am id-di-in
8. šà ^regir¹-šà ú-bi-la šu-ú
9. ù be-el di-ni-^ršu¹
10. i-tu-ur-ru-ma i-na-ak-ki-ru-šu
11. ^rki¹-di-na šà ^dgal ù ^rmùš.eren¹ la-pi-it
12. ^rù¹ šà-a ku-nu-uk-ka an-na-a i-in-^rnu¹
13. [i]-na a-wa-at ^dgal¹ ù ^dmùš.eren li-šī¹
14. ḫa-aṭ-ṭu šà ^diš-me-ka-ra-ab
15. i-na qa-^raq¹-qa-^rdi¹-šu li-[iš]-^rša-ki-in¹

Translation

(1) Išme-karāb, (2) king of the city of Susa, (3) hated the *utukku* demon and (4) to the city of Susa, (5) when out of his doors (6) he caused (him) to leave, (7) he gave a seal, (8) to which he afterwards gave power. He (9) or his adversary in court, (10) should they contest the agreement again, (11) the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak has been touched upon. (12) And he who shall alter this seal(ed tablet), (13) may he go away upon the command of Napiriša and Inšušinak. (14) The sceptre of Išme-karāb (15) may it be put upon his head.

Commentary

Line 1, ^diš-me-^rka¹-[ra-ab]: According to Amiet (1973: 17), the first line should be restored ^diš-me-^rka¹-[ra-ab-dingir], since he believed the owner of the seal to be Išme-karāb-ili, who appears as the twenty-third and penultimate witness in the text. This hypothesis is followed by de Miroschedji (1980: 3), who furthermore supposes that Išme-karāb-ili was a judge. Several persons named Išme-karāb-ili are known to us from the Susa tablets,⁶ not one of whom, however, is a judge. De Miroschedji's error is probably due to the fact that Scheil (1932: 187) ascribed the seal to the judge mentioned in the text, but this was Ḫabil-kīni, not Išme-karāb-ili. Amiet's proposition can no longer be sustained because the Haft Tepe

6. At least two different persons bore the name Išme-karāb-ili, viz., the son of Šamaš-gāmil (*MDP* 22 53: 29) and the son of Ajēni (*MDP* 24 383: 21, to be dated during or after the reigns of Tata and Temti-Agun). Other attestations are not accompanied by a patronym: *MDP* 22 6: rev. 3'; 23 175: 6, 235: rev. 18', and 275: 4 (+ *šupur Išme-karāb-ili* on LeE). Note the alternative spelling *Išme-karāb-ma-ilum* in *MDP* 22 90: 14; 23 209: rev. 12' (oath by Temti-halki sukkal and Kuk-Našur) and 323: 2' and 7'. *MDP* 321-2 and 323 have several witnesses in common (the *ḫupirriša* Iqbi-dīna, the *gugallū* Šuhhutu and Ikšudu, the *ippu* Šulanū, and the scribe Inšušinak-abī), which seems to indicate that Išme-karāb-ili and Išme-karāb-ma-ilum are one and the same person and thus variants of the same name.

impressions show that there was nothing written after Išme-karāb. It is now clear that we are not dealing with the name of a person, but with the deity (see Glassner 1991: 121–22). There are, moreover, two reasons why this could not have been Išme-karāb-ili's seal in any case: First, Išme-karāb-ili is the penultimate witness in a list of twenty-four witnesses, among whom are high functionaries such as a *ḥašša* (a kind of city ruler?⁷), a *kiparu* (a chief of police or provost marshal?⁸), a *kuduḥtaš*,⁹ a *teppir* (an important judicial official¹⁰), and a *ḥupirririša*.¹¹ It is thus very unlikely that he of all people would seal this tablet. Second, the second line of the seal inscription mentions the title lugal *Šušim*, “king of Susa,” which would imply that this Išme-karāb-ili would have been the ruler of Susa. As the penultimate witness without a title, this is impossible.

Line 3, ú.¹ *dug₄-am i-ze-er-ma*: *utukkam izēr-ma*, “he hated the *utukku* demon.” Glassner (1991: 122) reads [x x] *li-i-zi-ir-[ma²]* and translates “May Išme-karāb damn” (Qu’Išme-karāb maudisse). Collation of the Susa tablet showed that the sign before /i/ is certainly not /li/, but most probably /am/. Moreover, a precative would not make sense here, given the *-ma* connecting this verb to *ušēši* in line 6, a 3rd person singular preterite *Š* of *wašûm*.

Lines 5–6, *ki-¹ma¹ ad-da-la-ti-¹šu¹ ú-¹še¹-ší*: *kīma addalātīšu ušēši*, “when out of his doors he caused (him) to leave.” The conjunction *kīma* clearly indicates the beginning of a subordinate clause. *addalātīšu* is to be understood as *ana dalātīšu*, with the loss of the final vowel /a/ of the preposition *ana* and the assimilation of the consonant /n/ to the initial consonant of *dalātīšu*, which results in *andalātīšu* becoming *addalātīšu*. This phenomenon is not uncommon in the Susa texts, as already pointed out by Salonen (1962: 82–84).

Line 7, *ku-nu-uk-ú-am id-di-in*: Note the erroneous spelling of *kunukkuam*, which should be *kunukkam*. Such “broken” spellings are not uncommon in the Susa texts, as already pointed out by Salonen (1962: 42–43).

Line 8a, *ša¹ egir¹-ša¹ ú-bi-la*: *ša warkīša ubilla*, “to which he afterwards gave power.” Scheil (1932: 188) interpreted *ú-bi-la* as a 3rd person masculine plural preterite of *wabālum* (“Après qu’ils l’ont emportée”). This is, however, impossible, as this would have been *ublūnim*. The only possible way to interpret this verbal form is as a 3rd person singular factitive preterite of *bēlum* followed by a ventive: *ubillam*, “he gave power.” The loss of the mimation on the ventive is not at all surprising since the use of mimation was inconsistent in the Susa texts (see Salonen 1962: 92–93).

Lines 9b–11, *šu-ú ù be-el di-ni-¹šu¹ i-tu-ur-ru-ma i-na-ak-ki-ru-šu¹ ki¹-di-na ša¹ dgal ù¹ d¹mùš.eren¹ la-pi-it*: *šū u bēl dīnīšu iturrū-ma inakkirūšu kiddina ša Napiriša u Inšušinak lapit*, “he or his adversary in court, should they contest the agreement again, the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak has been touched upon.” Scheil (*MDP* 23: 188) interpreted *šū u bēl dīnīšu* as the subject of the verb in line 8 *ú-bi-la* (“Après qu’ils l’ont emportée,—celui-là et son adversaire en justice”). As stated above, *ubilla* is to be interpreted as a 3rd person singular factitive preterite and the subject is clearly the god mentioned on the first line, Išme-karāb. *Šū u bēl dīnīšu* is the subject of the hendiadys *iturrū-ma inakkirūšu*, “should they contest the agreement again” (translated by Scheil “qui reviendrait dessus, et la changerait”). Moreover, Scheil (1932: 188) read [u] (?) di-na (ilu) GAL u (ilu) Šušinak la-pi(?) -it(?) and translated “et infirmerait (?) le jugement du dieu GAL et de Šušinak.” Collation clearly showed that line 11 is to be read *ki-di-na ša¹ dgal ù¹ d¹mùš.eren¹ la-pi-it*. This poses two prob-

7. See *ElWI* I sub *ḥa-aš-šà* “aE Bezeichnung eines Würdenträgers, etwa *Stadtvogt*.”

8. See *ElWI* I sub *ki-pa-ru* “aE, vermutlich akkadisiert, etwa *Polizeichef, Proföß*.”

9. See *CAD* K sub *kuduḥtaš* “(designation of an official or a craftsman); OB Elam; foreign word.”

10. See Tavernier 2007: 59–60.

11. See *CAD* H sub *ḥupirririša* “(a profession); Elam; Elam. word. Elam. name of a profession, perhaps composed of *ḥupiri* ‘he’ and *riša* ‘great’.”

lems: 1) *lapit*, being a singular stative of *lapātum*, cannot have *šū u bēl dīnīšu* as its subject, and 2) *kidinna ša Napiriša u Inšušinak*, the only other option, is clearly an accusative. The only explanation is a scribal error: the scribe wrote an accusative *ki-di-na* where he should have written a nominative *ki-di-nu*. The erroneous use of cases is not uncommon in the Susa texts (see Salonen 1962: 110).

Line 13, *[i]-na a-wa-at* ^{dr}gal¹ ù ^{dr}mùš.eren li-šl¹: *ina awat Napiriša u Inšušinak līši*: Both Scheil (*MDP* 23: 188) and Glassner (1991: 122) read *[i]-na a-wa-at* ^dutu ù [^d. . .] and translated “upon the command of Šamaš and . . .” The sign after the first /dingir/ is broken, but by comparison with ^dgal in line 11, it is clear that it must have been /gal/. Moreover, it makes much more sense: as the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak has been touched upon, it is only logical that whoever breaks the agreement would have to leave upon the command of Napiriša and Inšušinak (see also *infra*).

INTERPRETATION

The inscription consists of two major parts: a first, from the first to the eighth line, and a second, starting with the last word in line 8 (*šū*) until the end. The first part explains that Išme-karāb gave a seal, which he provided with legal force, to the city of Susa. There is no doubt that the seal mentioned is the very seal under consideration. In the second part, the actual content of the seal is given, viz., legal clauses that were required in any juridical document.

First Part (lines 1–8a)

Išme-karāb šar Šušim utukkam izērma ana Šušim kīma addalātišu ušēši kunukkam iddin ša warkīša ubilla, “Išme-karāb, king of Šusa, hated the *utukku* demon and to the city of Susa, when out of his doors he caused (him) to leave, he gave a seal to which he afterwards gave power.”

According to Lambert (1976–80), Išme-karāb was a god of justice, both in Babylonia, where he was one of the standing gods in the cult of Šamaš at Ebabbar as stated in the lexical list An = Anum, and in Assyria, where he appears among the seven divine judges. Lambert proposes that Išme-karāb was adopted during the Old Babylonian period in Susa by the Elamites, who continued to worship this deity throughout the Middle Elamite period. Išme-karāb is indeed frequently mentioned, together with Inšušinak, in the oaths of the economic and legal documents from Sukkalmah Susa. The fact that he is called “king of Susa” in this seal inscription shows that he was worshipped in Susa during the Sukkalmah period. Išme-karāb is also mentioned in *MDP* 18 251 (Sb 21854), a funerary text in which it is said that Išme-karāb and Lāgamāl precede the dead into the underworld, after which Inšušinak passes judgment in the burial pit (see Steve and Gasche 1996 and Tavernier 2013). Steve and Gasche (1996: 331) date this text, found in Tomb 3 excavated by de Mecquenem in 1914, at the end of the Sukkalmah period, the same era in which the seal under consideration was used.

According to the seal inscription, Išme-karāb hated the *utukku* demon, whom he first caused to leave out through his doors, after which he gave the seal to Susa and provided it with legal force. *udug* (ú.dug₄) or *utukku* is a general designation for “demon,” used to indicate the seven evil demons: *asakku*, *namtaru*, *utukku*, *alû*, *eṭimmu*, *gallû*, and *ilu limnu*, children of Anu, who live in the graves and represent death in various forms (Ebeling 1938: 107–8). The *utukku* demon in particular stands for the ghost of the dead (Ebeling 1938: 108 and *CAD* U/W sub *utukku* 2). As yet, the *utukku/û* is/are not attested in texts from Sukkalmah Susa, but in his role of preceding (and protecting?) the dead during their journey to the underworld where they would be tried before Inšušinak, it seems logical that Išme-karāb would have been the one (hating and) repulsing the *utukku/û*. How and why this *utukku*

demon got into “his doors” (*dalātīšu*)¹² and why it had to be chased out before the seal could be given to Susa are not clear to me. Surely the *utukku* demon embodies the evil that had to be driven out before Išme-karāb was able to do good for the city of Susa, but the reason why this demon prevents the carrying out of justice escapes me.

Most important is the fact that Išme-karāb provided the seal with legal power, which brings me to the second part of the seal inscription, listing the penalty clauses that were normally written—in more or less extensive form—by the scribe at the end of economic and legal documents, and which both parties were bound to observe.

Second Part (lines 8b-15)

šū u bēl dīnīšu iturrūma inakkirūšu kidinna Napiriša u Inšušinak lapit u ša kunukka annā innū ina awat Napiriša u Inšušinak līši ḥaṭṭu ša Išme-karāb ina qaqqadīšu liššakin, “He or his adversary in court, should they contest the agreement again, the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak has been touched upon. And he who shall alter this seal(ed tablet), may he go away upon the command of Napiriša and Inšušinak. May the sceptre of Išme-karāb be put upon his head.”

The second part of the first phrase resembles the clause *kiden Inšušinak ilput*, “he has touched the *kidinnu* of Inšušinak,” commonly used in economic and legal documents, especially inheritance divisions and sales, and part of the larger penalty clause *ša ibbalak-katu rittašu u lišāššu inakkissū kiden Inšušinak ilput imât*, to be translated “he who breaks the agreement, they will cut off his hand and tongue; (because) he has touched the *kiden* of Inšušinak, he will die,” according to Charpin (2001), who rightly interprets *kidinnam lapātum* as an act through which the parties bind themselves to comply with the terms of the agreement. By actually touching the *kidinnu* of Inšušinak, they commit themselves. If one of them breaks his commitment, he will be punished. As in the economic and legal documents, where *imât*, “he will die,” is mostly absent, the phrase in the seal inscription is also incomplete: Since the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak has been touched, a severe punishment will follow if they contest the agreement again.

The exact meaning of *kidinnu*, a loanword in Akkadian derived from the Elamite *kiten*, is not entirely clear in this context. According to Grillett (1973: 139), *kidinnu* is to be understood in the context of legal documents as a place in the sacred domain of a god in which legal acts and ceremonies took place, which seems to be corroborated by some texts.¹³ This, however, is unlikely, as one was supposed to touch the *kidinnu*. CAD and EIW translate it as “divine protection, divinely enforced security (symbolized by a sacred insigne)” and “magischer Schutzbann, Numen,”¹⁴ which could be violated or desecrated by touching it, based on the assumption that touching this emblem was taboo, as proposed by Hinz (1950 and 1964: 87).

As Charpin (2001) has shown, this interpretation is wrong, since touching (violating or desecrating) the *kidinnu* is not the outcome of breaking the agreement, but on the contrary

12. This might refer to the city of Susa in its entirety, although one would rather expect *bābātīša*, “her gates,” since a city has gates and is feminine, or to an unspecified sanctuary of Išme-karāb.

13. MDP 22 160, in which it is said that the parties have come to a mutually acceptable agreement before witnesses in Susa in the *kidinnu* of Inšušinak (35–37: *igi 11 ab.meš an-nu-ti 'i-na' šu-šī-im i-na ki-de-en* [d]¹ mūš.eren¹ im-ta-¹ ag¹-ru); MDP 24 390, in which a person says he had been staying in the *kidinnu* of Simut (1–2: [a]-na-ku [i]-na ki-de-¹ en¹ [d]¹ šī-mu-ut¹ aš-ba-ku-ma, and 5: i-na ki-de-en¹ d¹ šī-mu-ut aš-ba-ku-ma); and MDP 24 391, in which one of the parties had sent another person's wife up to and down from the *kidinnu* (3–4: a-wi-il-ta aš-ša-at iš-ku-up-pi i-na ki-di-ni ú-še-la-am-ma, and 22–23: 'a¹-wi-il-ta iš-tu ki-di-ni ú-še-ri-da). See also Leemans 1946: 40–41.

14. CAD K sub *kidinnu* and EIW I sub *ki-te-en* and *ki-tin*.

is an act of commitment understood to prevent one from breaking the agreement. By breaking the agreement one violates or desecrates the *kidinnu* and thus loses divine protection. A possible answer can be found in *MDP* 24 337 (oath by Tan-uli and Temti-halki), which adds after the above-mentioned penalty clause *tamû qaqqad ilišunu laptû*, “they swore (and) were touching the head of their god,” already mentioned by Charpin (2001), implying that the *kidinnu* of a deity might have been an image of or an emblem representing this deity.¹⁵

Remarkably, the seal inscription mentions the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak, whereas the economic and legal Susa texts normally only mention the *kidinnu* of Inšušinak, which makes perfect sense since Inšušinak is the city god of Susa. On two occasions, the *kidinnu* of another deity, respectively Ruhurater (*MDP* 23 273) or Šimut (*MDP* 24 390), is mentioned. *MDP* 23 273, a loan of ½ mina of silver, in which the *kidinnu* of Ruhurater is mentioned, refers to the weight stone of the city of Huhur, the cult centre of Ruhurater (see Henkelman 2008), which implies that the tablet was written in Huhur, probably because one of the parties originated from this city. *MDP* 24 390 does not refer to a specific locality and the cult centre of Šimut is as yet unknown (see Henkelman 2009). It thus seems that several deities had a *kidinnu*—which logically would have been located in their sanctuary in their city—but that a deity could also have his/her *kidinnu* in another deity’s sanctuary, as was the case in Babylonia, where deities had chapels in temples of various deities in various cities.

In the seal inscription under consideration, *kidinna* is clearly a singular, which implies there was one single *kidinnu* belonging to both Napiriša and Inšušinak. The fact that Napiriša, city god of Anšan (see de Miroschedji 1980), is mentioned before Inšušinak, city god of Susa, shows the importance of both cities and both gods, and probably the supremacy of Anšan over Susa during the Sukkalmah period. Recently, I was able to prove that the Šimaškians, who ruled over a vast territory, extending from their capital Anšan in the south to the Caspian Sea in the north, were able to enlarge it considerably to the west when they reclaimed Susa and the Susiana plain from the Sumerians at the beginning of Ibši-Sîn’s reign. After having conquered Susa, they established a new state structure with the Šimaškian king as the central and highest authority, under whom two Sukkalmahs each ruled over a part of the vast empire: one over Elam and Šimaški and the other over Anšan and Susa. At a lower level, Sukkals supervised smaller territories or cities under the authority of their Sukkalmah and the King (see De Graef 2012a).

It is all the more clear that both Anšan, capital and place of origin of the Šimaškians, and Susa, metropolis in the west, occupied key positions in the empire, which is nicely symbolised here by Napiriša and Inšušinak. This would mean that the clause of the seal inscription covers the whole empire, from Anšan to Susa, contrary to the clause in the economic and legal texts from Susa that mentions only the local deity Inšušinak. This would also imply that the use of the cylinder seal was not restricted to the city of Susa—although it was given to Susa by Išme-karāb—but that it could have been used elsewhere in the empire, which is confirmed by the fact that it is impressed on tablets from both Susa and Haft Tepe.

The second phrase consists of a protasis *ša kunukka annâ innû*, “whoever shall alter this seal(ed tablet),” and a double apodosis: 1) *ina awat Napiriša u Inšušinak liši*, “may he go away upon the command of Napiriša and Inšušinak,” and 2) *ḥaṭṭu ša Išme-karāb ina qaqqadīšu liššakin*, “may the sceptre of Išme-karāb be put upon his head.” As for the protasis, *kunukku* means “seal” as well as “sealed tablet.” It is obvious that it was forbidden to alter the inscription on this seal, which could have been done by re-cutting it. On the

15. It goes without saying that *kidinnu* or *kiten* can have multiple interpretations and translations, dependent on the context in which it is used, but this lies beyond the scope of the present article.

other hand, it might just as well refer to the text on the tablet on which this seal had been impressed. The apodosis resembles two curse formulae commonly used in economic and legal documents (divisions, sales, adoptions, and donations): *ina awat ili u šarri liši*, “he must go away upon the command of god and king,” and *ḥaṭṭu ša ili u šarri ina qaqqadišu* (or *ina muḥḥišu*) *liššakin*, “the sceptre of god and king must be put upon his head (or his skull).”¹⁶ In some cases, *ili u šarri*, “god and king,” are replaced by specific rulers and/or gods.¹⁷ In the seal inscription under consideration there is no mention of rulers but only of gods, viz., Napiriša, Inšušinak, and Išme-karāb. This makes perfect sense, as Išme-karāb, who had given this seal to the city of Susa and provided it with legal power, would put his sceptre on the head of forgers, and Napiriša and Inšušinak, whose *kidinnu* was touched as a sign of commitment, would banish whoever broke the agreement.

THE PRESENTATION SCENE

Apart from the fifteen-line Akkadian inscription, the seal has a particular presentation scene featuring on the left a deity represented as a worshipper, standing on a platform and facing another much smaller deity, who is holding the rod and ring and sits on a snake throne placed on a platform supported by two snakes whose entwined bodies form a post. At the bottom, this post is held upright by two naked heroes kneeling symmetrically on mountains. The small deity on the right is no doubt the “god with the snake and spring waters” (“le dieu au serpent et aux eaux jaillissantes”)—as he was called by de Miroschedji (1981)—attested on Elamite seal cylinders and reliefs from the beginning of the second millennium until the reign of the Middle Elamite king Untaš-Napiriša (1300–1340) (see de Miroschedji 1981). This god was at first identified as Napiriša by Amiet (1973: 17) and later as Inšušinak by de Miroschedji (1981).

Vallat (1981) was able to read the name of the god who was invoked in the partially preserved inscription on the stele of Untaš-Napiriša as Inšušinak (^{dr}*in*¹-*šu-uš*[-*na-ak*]). As a consequence, he identified the worshipping king as Untaš-Napiriša and the god on the upper register of the stele sitting on a snake throne, holding in his right hand the rod and ring and in his left a snake, as Inšušinak (see de Miroschedji 1981: Pl. 8). We must, however, bear in mind that Napiriša and Inšušinak, known as the kings of the gods, appear together so often that their characteristics and competences seem to have been somewhat intermingled, as Koch (1998) has pointed out. This is especially the case, since representations of the “god with the snake and spring waters” are attested both in Susiana and in Fars, and prototypes on the Iranian plateau go back to the fourth and third millennia (de Miroschedji 1981: 20–21).

It is highly remarkable that the “god with the snake and spring waters” on the seal under consideration is small, contrary to all other presentation scenes featuring a worshipper and this deity, where both are of equal size (de Miroschedji 1981: Pls. 1–2 and 5–8). The difference in size is due to the fact that the “god with the snake and spring waters” is represented here as an image on a standard. It seems that the scene in fact depicts that which is described

16. CAD H (*sub ḥaṭṭu* A) translates this curse formula “may the terror (emanating) from god and king be upon him (may he forfeit the legal protection of god and king),” with *ḥaṭṭu*, “panic, fear,” instead of *ḥaṭṭu*, “sceptre”; see also De Meyer 1962: 97, 123, 159, and 170. Landsberger (1964: 58) corrected CAD H by stating that it should be read *ḥaṭṭu*, “sceptre”; see also Salonen (1967: 33) and AHw I *sub ḥaṭṭu(m)*.

17. E.g., *ina awat Šiwe-palar-ḥuppak u Kudu-zuluš liši* (MDP 23 200), *ina awat Temti-Agun u Kuk-Našur liši* (MDP 23 283), *ina awat Napiriša u Inšušinak liši* (MDP 23 282 and 24 338), *ina awat Lila-irtaš u Temti-agun liši* (MDP 28 398), *ḥaṭṭu ša Šiwe-palar-ḥuppak ina muḥḥišu liššakin* (MDP 23 200), *ḥaṭṭum ša Kuk-Našur ina qaqqadišu liššakin* (MDP 23 282), *ḥaṭṭu ša Temti-Agun u Kuk-Našur ina muḥḥišu liššakin* (MDP 23 283).

in the seal inscription, namely the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak, an image of both deities (depicted as one) on a standard to be touched as an act of commitment.

This is not at all remarkable, since, according to de Miroschedji (1981: 4 n. 8), correspondence between the inscription and the iconography of a seal was not uncommon in Elam. The fact that both Napiriša and Inšušinak are represented here as a single deity is remarkable but not unique: A fragmentary bust representing the “god with the snake and spring waters” dating from the reign of Untaš-Napiriša and probably originating from Chogha Zanbil,¹⁸ mentions the double patronage of “Napiriša and Inšušinak” (de Miroschedji 1981: 14). It thus seems that the “god with the snake and spring waters” could represent both Napiriša and Inšušinak simultaneously,¹⁹ which by no means implies that the two deities were in fact one—as was earlier believed to be the case for Napiriša and Humban, especially since *napiriša* means literally “great god” and is written with the logogram ^dgal (see Hinz 1965). This was later disproven (see de Miroschedji 1980), since the two gods are very often mentioned together.

If the standard is indeed the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak, the worshipper, who is also a deity as demonstrated by his tiara decorated with horns,²⁰ must be Išme-karāb.²¹ The fact that Išme-karāb—although larger—is clearly inferior to the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak, since he worships it, is not surprising. As mentioned above, a funerary text dating from the same period as the Susa text on which the seal is impressed mentions Išme-karāb, who, together with Lāgamāl, precedes the dead into the underworld, where Inšušinak passes judgment (see Steve and Gasche 1996 and Tavernier 2013). Therefore, Išme-karāb’s function can be interpreted as supporting Inšušinak in his position as judge of the dead. This is corroborated by the fact that he is often mentioned in the oath in economic and legal documents after Inšušinak. In his supporting role, Išme-karāb worships the *kidinnu* of Napiriša and Inšušinak, the symbol of justice par excellence.

18. This piece was, however, found by de Morgan in Susa, whither it had been transported together with Untaš-Napiriša’s stele in antiquity.

19. The same might be the case for some of the seal cylinders with presentation scenes featuring a worshipper and the “god with the snake and spring waters” from the Sukkalmah and Kidinuid periods, especially that of Tan-uli (MDP 43 2330), where the worshipper (Tan-uli?) receives waves of water coming out of the rod and ring held by the deity sitting on a snake throne and holding a snake in his left hand. The legend of the seal reads: Tan-uli, Sukkalmah, Sukkal of Susa and Šimaški, son of Šilhaha’s sister. Since Tan-uli clearly exercised authority in both Susa and the Iranian highlands, it is possible that the “god with the snake and spring waters” represents here both Napiriša (of Šimaški with its capital Anšan) and Inšušinak (of Susa) at the same time.

Similarly, on the seal of Tepti-ahar (de Miroschedji 1981: Pl. 7; see also Herrero 1976: 104 and Neghaban 1991: 77 and 107–8), the worshipper (Tepti-ahar?) receives the rod and ring from the hands of the deity on the snake throne. The inscription here reads: “Tepti-ahar, king of Susa and Anšan, servant of Kirwašir and Inšušinak.” Again, the “god with the snake and spring waters” might represent both Napiriša and Inšušinak, reflecting the fact that Tepti-ahar exercised power in both Anšan and Susa. The problem here is that Tepti-ahar calls himself servant of the gods Kirwašir and Inšušinak, rather than of Napiriša and Inšušinak, but see the seal of Kidinū (Amiet *apud* Steve, Gasche, and De Meyer 1980: 139), king of Susa and Anšan, servant of his god Kirwašir, which depicts a worshipper carrying a goat facing a deity on a throne who is clearly not the “god with the snake and spring waters.”

20. For another seal depicting a deity worshipping the “god with the snake and spring waters” dating from the same period, see de Miroschedji 1981: Pl. 2, no. 4.

21. According to de Miroschedji (1981: 4) the worshipping deity is Napiriša, based on the fact that both gods are invoked in the seal inscription. It is, however, very unlikely that Napiriša would have been depicted in a position inferior to Inšušinak, since both gods were equally important. De Miroschedji’s erroneous interpretation is due to the fact that he did not have a correct and complete transcription of the seal inscription at his disposal and followed Amiet’s hypothesis that the owner of the seal was Išme-karāb-ili (Amiet 1973: 17), which Glassner (1991: 121–22) proved wrong.

Size of the Seal

Unlike other cylinder seals owned and used by private individuals, which are on average 20 mm high, this seal is considerably larger. On the basis of the impressions on the Susa tablet, the full size of the cylinder seal can be calculated: its height was 42.6 mm, including the granulated cap (which was probably of gold), and its circumference was 73.3 mm. Being 22.3 mm in diameter, it was nearly as large as a one euro coin.

Function of the Seal

I have shown that this was definitely a very exceptional seal, given by Išme-karāb to the city of Susa and mentioning in its long legend legal clauses that were normally written at the end of legal documents. The tablet upon which the seal was impressed does not, in fact, include these legal clauses. Does this mean that the seal impression replaced them and, as such, that it marks this tablet as a valid legal document? If so, this would have been a rather efficient practice, since it was no doubt much faster and easier to impress a seal than to write all the necessary legal clauses by hand. If this were the case, it is all the more remarkable that this seal should occur only on one Susa tablet. Why was it not impressed on all economic and legal documents requiring these legal clauses? The only possible answer to this question is that the function of this seal was not simply to replace the clauses. But then what was its function?

The answer lies in the text of the tablet.

THE MATTER OF *MDP* 23 321-2 (BK 1723)²²

As mentioned above, *MDP* 23 321-2 is a so-called “Quasi-Hüllentafel” recording litigation concerning a part of the inheritance of Damqīya. His sons, Anih-Šušim and Lûlu, pressed charges against Belī, claiming a field that Belī had inherited from his father Ahuhutu, who himself had been adopted by Damqīya. Before the *teppir* and judge Habil-kīni they appeared together in court, where Belī was heard and defended himself by calling upon the custom established by Inšušinak and Išme-karāb according to which the position of brother by adoption is as valid as the position of a biological brother. During this trial, Belī spoke the following words: “Damqīya, son of Anih-Šušim, took him as a brother. According to the custom that the position of brother by adoption is as valid as the position of a biological brother and the position of a son by adoption is as valid as the position of a biological son, which Inšušinak and Išme-karāb established, the property of Ahuhuti, my father, [. . . and] has been returned to me.”

The final verb here is *ittūram*, a third singular perfect G of *târum* ‘to return, to revert to a previous condition or owner’ (see *CAD* T *sub* *târu* 2c3’), with a pronominal first person singular dative suffix: “it has been returned to me.” Unfortunately, we do not know what was written before this verb, line 20 being broken at this point. Nevertheless, the fact that the property of his father had reverted to him implies that it had previously been taken from him. As Anih-Šušim and Lûlu were the ones claiming the property of Ahuhutu, father of Belī, it seems that at first they had been judged in the right and awarded the field. However, Belī successfully appealed against this decision, after which his father’s property was returned to him according to Inšušinak and Išme-karāb’s custom. Apparently Anih-Šušim and Lûlu then appealed, after which another *teppir*, another judge, a *ḥašša*, a *kiparu*, and numerous Susians

22. A collated and completed transliteration and new translation and interpretation of this text are given in my study on the Anih-Šušim family, forthcoming in the proceedings of the international conference “Susa and Elam II: History, Language, Religion and Culture” held at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve 6–9 July 2015.

sided with the original *teppir* and judge. The tablets concerning the legacy of Anih-Šušim, which had been divided between his sons Damqīya and Amur-nūršu during the reign of Tâta and Temti-agun, were consulted. Having checked the tablets, the *teppir* and judge found for Anih-Šušim and Lûlu with regard to their father's inheritance in general, but dismissed their claim on Belî's field, which was cleared from claims and awarded to him.

In summary, this tablet mentions three different legal cases:

1) A first case in which Anih-Šušim and Lûlu claimed the field Belî inherited from his father, the adoptive brother of their father Damqīya, which they won. This case is not described on *MDP* 23 321-2, but it must have taken place, since the field was afterwards *returned* to Belî.

2) A first appeal in which Belî reclaimed the field he had inherited from his father, calling upon the custom that the position of brother by adoption is as valid as the position of a biological brother. As such, he proved his father was the rightful owner of the field, being the adoptive brother of Damqīya. This case was brought before the *teppir* and judge Habil-kîni, who put Belî in the right, after which the field was returned to him. This case is briefly described on *MDP* 23 321-2, since this was necessary in order to understand the third case, the proper subject of *MDP* 23 321-2. As such, *MDP* 23 321-2 refers to the tablet on which the preceding case was recorded. No doubt, this previous document referred in turn to the first case. The fact that the adoption of Belî's father (Ahuhutu) by Anih-Šušim and Lûlu's father (Damqīya) is put forward shows that the case of Anih-Šušim and Lûlu vs. Belî was part of a larger case concerning the inheritance of Anih-Šušim, father of Damqīya and grandfather of the plaintiffs.

3) A second appeal in which Anih-Šušim and Lûlu reclaim the field that had been returned to Belî. Whereas the first appeal was settled before the *teppir* and judge Habil-kîni, a new court was put together to handle the second appeal. This new court was composed of the original *teppir* and judge Habil-kîni, supplemented with another *teppir*, another judge, a *ḥašša*, a *kiparu*, and numerous citizens of Susa. In other words, Anih-Šušim and Lûlu appealed to a higher court. This body upheld Belî's right to the field he had inherited from his father, but found for Anih-Šušim and Lûlu concerning the inheritance of their grandfather. Unfortunately, only this tablet recording the appeal to the higher court has been preserved.

Most importantly for the current study is the fact that *MDP* 23 321-2 records the procedure and verdict of a "Supreme Court," which in my opinion explains why this exceptional seal was impressed on the tablet. Contrary to what Scheil (*MDP* 23: 187), Amiet (1973: 17), and de Miroschedji (1980: 3) put forward, this is not the seal of a particular judge, but the seal of the "Supreme Court," given by Išme-karāb, god of justice, to the city of Susa, which explains the peculiarity of its legend, presentation scene, and size, as well as the reason it was only used exceptionally. One can imagine that it was only occasionally, when all other possibilities had been exhausted, that cases were brought before such a "Supreme Court."

Whereas ordinary court cases were conducted by a *teppir* and a judge, cases brought before the "Supreme Court" were judged by high city officials (*teppir*, judge, *ḥašša*, and *kiparu*) and a panel of citizens. The fragmentary tablet from Haft Tepe on which the same seal is impressed (HT 21 = Herrero and Glassner 1993, nr. 206) even implies that the king might have been involved. The first line reads: "Tepti-ahar, king of Susa [and Anšan]." Glassner (1991: 111) supposes that this text is a royal donation, based on the mention of the king and the verbs *irēmšu*, "he took pity on him," and *iqīš*, "he offered." Unfortunately, the rest of the text is illegible, but since Tepti-ahar is the subject of *irēmšu* ("Tepti-ahar, king of Susa and Anšan, took pity on him"), one might think of a situation in which someone presented a petition for mercy to the king as part of a procedure and verdict of the "Supreme Court." The fact that the seal was impressed on this tablet clearly proves its juridical character.

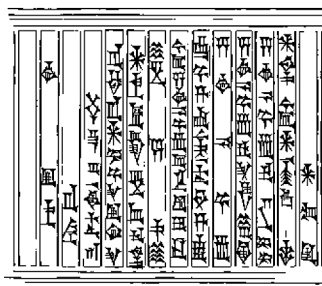


Fig. 5. Composite sketch of the seal impressed on *MDP* 23 242 and 325. Drawing by Erik Smekens. Scale 150%.

What is more, the court seal was used during the reigns of several kings and in various places. *MDP* 23 321-2 can be dated to approximately 1550 because of the persons involved, whereas HT 21 is to be dated to the reign of Tepti-ahar, ca. 1400. This means that the seal was in use for at least 150 years, during both the Sukkalmah and Kidinuid dynasties, indicating the continuity between the Old and Middle Elamite periods. This is corroborated by the tablets found in level XII in the Royal City of Susa by Ghirshman, in which both Sukkalmahs and the so-called founder of the Kidinuid dynasty, Kidinû, are attested (see Steve, Gasche, and De Meyer 1980: 92). The seal was used in Susa and nearby Haft Tepe (ancient Kabnak), an important religious and administrative center during Tepti-ahar's reign and that of his predecessor. Although it has been suggested that Tepti-ahar retreated to Haft Tepe after losing power in Susa and Anšan (see Potts 1999: 205), there is no proof whatsoever that he lost control over Susa. Both his title and the fact that he appears in the asseverative oath of *MDP* 23 248²³ imply that he ruled over Susa. Moreover, the letters found in levels XIII and XII in the Royal City show that Susa was in close contact with the palace in Anšan at the end of the Sukkalmah and beginning of the Kidinuid periods,²⁴ which seems to speak against a possible disintegration of the empire. It would be interesting to know whether the court seal was also used in Anšan, since Napiriša is mentioned in its legend. Unfortunately, none of the early material from Anšan has been published, although Ur III and Old Babylonian tablets were found there (see Reiner 1972: 177 and Sumner 1973: 288).

Although the court seal is attested only on *MDP* 23 321-2, it might have been in use earlier in Susa, especially since two additional Susa tablets bear impressions of a similar seal, as already noticed by Glassner (1991: 124).

A SIMILAR SEAL ON *MDP* 23 242 (BK 875) AND 325 (BK 1339)

A similar official seal is impressed five times on *MDP* 23 242 (twice on the reverse and upper edge and once on the left edge; traces of the seal can be found under the writing of both obverse and reverse) and three times on *MDP* 23 325 (twice on the left edge and once on the right edge; traces of the seal can be found under the writing of both obverse and reverse). In none of these cases has the seal been completely impressed, and unfortunately it is not possible to reconstruct it completely on the basis of the partial impressions. Scheil (*MDP* 23: 103) was able to read ten lines of the legend. Collation of the tablets shows that this legend consisted of at least fourteen lines (Fig. 5). None of the impressions clearly shows

23. *MDP* 23 248: (17b) ^dmūš.eren (18) *lu da-ru te-ep-ta-ha-ar* (19a) *li-iš'-li-[<]im*.

24. See my forthcoming "The Writing in The Wall: A Study of the Letters of Temti-halki Found in a Cache in Old Babylonian Susa," read at the 58^e RAI in Leiden in July 2012.

a scene. The reverse of *MDP* 23 352 might bear traces of a scene, but the impression is too vague to discern figures.

SEAL 2—THE INSCRIPTION

On the basis of the partial impressions, part of the Akkadian inscription can be reconstructed:

Transcription

- 1'. [ina awat²] ^dEN.ZU
- 2'. ^diškur ù dingir.meš ra-bu-tim
- 3'. i-na a-wa-at šī-il-ḫa-ḫa
- 4'. i-na a-wa-at si-ir-uk-tu-uḫ
- 5'. i-na a-wa-at
- 6'. ši-we-pa-la-ar-ḫu-up-pa-ak
- 7'. ù i-na a-wa-at ku-du-zu-lu-uš
- 8'. li-i-šī
- 9'. ^dmūš.eren lugal ša šu-šī-im
- 10'. ma-am-ma-an ḫa-wi-ir su-ki-ir
- 11'. [ša . . .] ^rx bu² ú-ša-aḫ-ḫu-ma¹
- 12'. [. . .] ^rx x x x ma-lam x¹
- 13'. [. . .] ^rna x x x su-un²¹ [. . .]
- 14'. [. . .] ^rx x x x x x x¹

Translation

(1') [. . . upon the command of²] Šin (2') Adad and the great gods, (3') upon the command of Šilhaha, (4') upon the command of Siruktuh, (5') upon the command (6') of Šiwe-palar-huppak, (7') and upon the command of Kudu-zuluš (8') may he go away. (9') Inšušinak, king of Susa, (10') any future king (11') who should remove [. . .] (12'–14') *illegible*.

Commentary

Line 10', *mamman ḫawir sukkir*: “Any future king” is a bilingual Akkadian (*mamman*) -Elamite (*ḫawir sukkir*) expression known from four Susa texts (*MDP* 23 282, 284, and *MDP* 28 397, 398) and one Dilbat text (*VS* 7 67) and discussed by Reiner 1953. In these texts, all so-called “royal charters,” it is used at the beginning of the curse formula *mamman ḫawir sukkir ša mašussu(nu) ušaḫḫûma ina awat RNs/DNs liši*, “Should any future king remove his/their *mašûtu* (a kind of privilege²⁵), may he leave upon the command of RNs/DNs.”

Line 11', [ša . . .] *ušaḫḫûma*, “who should remove [. . .]”: The verb *ušaḫḫûma* is known from the aforementioned curse formula used in the royal charters. However, just what any future king was forbidden to remove is not clear to me. One would expect *mašussu(nu)*, “his/their *mašûtu*,” on analogy with the curse formula, but the last sign before the verb seems to be /bu/.

Interpretation

If this seal has no scene but only a legend, the inscription might have started with “Inšušinak, king of Susa” (9') and ended with “may he go away” (8'). As such, the beginning would have been parallel to the previously discussed court seal that starts with “Išme-

25. See *CAD* M/I *sub* *mašûtu*, “(freedom from certain legal obligations applicable to landowners).”

karāb, king of Susa.” If so, this would be the seal of Inšušinak. What follows “Inšušinak, king of Susa” is broken, but begins with *mamman ḥawir sukkir ša* [. . .] *ušaḥḥû-ma*, which resembles the beginning of the curse formula used in the royal charters. This curse formula ends with *ina awat* RNs/DNs *liši*, “upon the command of RNs/DNs may he leave,” in lines 3’–8’. Perhaps line 1’ can be restored with *ina awat*, in which case the offender would be expelled by both deities and rulers.²⁶

What was written between “Inšušinak, king of Susa, any future king who would remove [. . .]” (9’–11’) and the curse (1’–8’) is unfortunately broken. It is even unclear how many lines there were originally between the two passages. By analogy with the Išme-karāb seal, we would expect to see something that Inšušinak has done or one or more of his characteristics. It is all the more odd that the curse formula with *mamman ḥawir sukkir* starts right after the mention of Inšušinak. In all probability, the *mamman ḥawir sukkir* is part of something Inšušinak has done, described in lines 12’–14’ (and perhaps even more lines), after which offenders (against something that Inšušinak had established?) are cursed.

There are two important differences in comparison to the Išme-karāb seal. Contrary to Išme-karāb’s seal, in which only Elamite deities (Napiriša and Inšušinak) are mentioned, this seal inscription mentions two Mesopotamian deities, the moon god Sîn and the storm god Adad, followed by “the great gods.” Both of these deities appear as theophoric elements in personal names but they are never mentioned in oaths or formulas in economic or legal texts from Susa.

Also contrary to Išme-karāb’s seal, in which no rulers are mentioned, this seal inscription mentions four important Elamite rulers upon whose command offenders would be expelled: Šilhaha, Siruktuh, Šiwe-palar-huppak, and Kudu-zuluš. Almost the exact enumeration—minus Šilhaha—is mentioned on the reverse of *MDP* 28 397, recording the installation by Kudu-zuluš of his servant Ši’esi and the establishment of the latter’s *mašûtu*, after which the curse formula is added. On the basis of this text and this seal inscription, among others, Grillo and Glassner (1991: 94) believe Siruktuh to be Sukkalmah, his eldest son Šiwe-palar-huppak Sukkal of Elam, and his other son Kudu-zuluš Sukkal of Susa.

Siruktuh, Šiwe-palar-huppak, and Kudu-zuluš indeed were at least partly contemporaries, since Siruktuh is mentioned as “king of Elam” in a letter from Shemshara to be dated during the reign of Šamši-Adad I (1719–1688), which makes it possible to date his reign to ca. 1700 (see De Graef 2009) and both Šiwe-palar-huppak and Kudu-zuluš are mentioned, respectively as king of Anšan and king of Susa, in Mari letters (see Charpin 2004: 210 with refs.) to be dated to Zimri-Lim 8–10 = Ha 26–28 = 1671–1669. There is, however, no proof that these individuals were related, and since we now know that not the Sukkalmah but the king was the highest authority, under whom two Sukkalmahs each ruled a part of the empire, it seems more likely that Siruktuh was king and Šiwe-palar-huppak and Kudu-zuluš both Sukkalmahs at that time. It is significant in this regard that Šilhaha, who is mentioned before Siruktuh, Šiwe-palar-huppak, and Kudu-zuluš in the curse formula, is known to have been Sukkalmah under king Ebarat, after which he succeeded Ebarat as king. Šilhaha, however, was by no means a contemporary, since he can be dated two centuries earlier, ca. 1880 (see De Graef 2012a). In all probability, he is mentioned because by that time he was considered a prestigious and illustrious predecessor, as is also shown by the fact that centuries after his time, rulers still claim to be his descendants.

The fact that rulers are mentioned in this seal inscription seems to point to its more secular character in comparison with the Išme-karāb seal. What is more, it can help us to date the

26. This is also the case in *MDP* 28 398: 17–19: *ina awat* ^a*Lila-irtaš u Temti-agun liši*.

seal, which must have been made ca. 1700. The question is, however, when and in what context it was used. Again, the answer lies in the texts of the tablets on which it was impressed.

MDP 23 242 (BK 875)

This document is a verdict stating that Taribatu underwent the *mê leqûm* procedure. *mê leqûm* literally means “to take the water”²⁷ and indicates a kind of judicial procedure. Depending on the outcome of this procedure, positive or negative, one of two verdicts is given.²⁸ Two other verdicts (*MDP 22 164* and *24 373*) also state that the litigant underwent the *mê leqûm* procedure before a judge.²⁹ The first was sealed by the *hutliš* (a representative or messenger?) Limûlu.³⁰ In *MDP 23 242*, Taribatu underwent the procedure before three persons, Sîn-iddinam, Qīšti, and Šu-ri-x-ri³¹, none of whom is known to have had official functions. Qīšti is probably the daughter of Temmimi, who had been cultivating the field that is the subject of the dispute and was thus involved.

Whatever the case may have been, it is clear that this tablet is once more part of a set of documents, in this instance regarding the charges pressed by Taribatu about the proceeds of the field cultivated by Qīšti. Before Taribatu underwent the *mê leqûm* procedure, he must have lodged an official complaint. Whether this procedure fits in with an appeal or case brought before a higher court is impossible to determine, since no other documents concerning this case have been preserved.

Unfortunately, *MDP 23 242* cannot be dated because there is no oath. The fact that the seal impressed on it can be dated ca. 1700 does not imply that the text was written at this time. A Taribatu also appears in *MDP 24 370*, a lease dated during the reign of Tan-uli, where he leases a field from Damqīya and Inšušinak-rappi-ilu. It is, however, not certain that this is the same person since his patronymic is not mentioned. If this were the case, *MDP 23 242* was written ca. 150 years after the seal was made, because Tan-uli can be dated between 1570 and 1500 (De Graef 2012b). This is not impossible, since we know that the Išme-karāb seal was also in use for at least 150 years.

MDP 23 325 (BK 1339)

Unfortunately, only the lower half of *MDP 23 325* is preserved, which means that the beginning and end of the text is lost, making it hard to understand what exactly happened. From what is preserved, we know that five witnesses, Ahu-waqar, son of Amiri; Rabibi, son of Inšušinak-muštešer; Šamaš-rabi; Kuk-Igišta, son of Šamaš-gāmil; and a woman called Layatu, stated in the orchard of Šamaš that from the reigns of Temti-Agun and Kuk-Našur onwards until the present, the bal.3.kam sustenance fields³¹ (and) Sîn-rabi’s house were first under the authority of Nūr-Kabta and later came under that of his son Ahuhutu. Before

27. This was erroneously interpreted by Scheil (*MDP 23*: 103–4) as “to lease the irrigation (of a field),” which led him to interpret this text as a lease contract.

28. For the *mê leqûm* procedure, see Frymer-Kensky (1979: 203–27), who proposes that it might have been a drinking trial in which the litigant had to drink a potion while stating the legitimacy of his claim. This would explain why the result was not immediately known, as one had to await the manifestation of symptoms in order to be found guilty or innocent. See also Frymer-Kensky 1981: 118–20.

29. *MDP 22 164*: 9: [igi . . .] ‘da’-a-a-ni me-e il-qé and *MDP 24 373*: 4: igi šar-ri-ia ‘di.kud’.

30. = *MDP 43 2023*. The legend of the seal reads: *li-mu-ú-lu / hu-ut-li-iš / dumu iš-ma-an-ni / ir é.a*. The exact meaning of *hutliš* is not known; see *ElW I sub hu-ut-li-iš* “aE Berufsbezeichnung, wohl Beauftragter, Kommisar” but *sub hu-ut-li* “aE Sendbote” and *CAD H sub hutliš* “(a profession).”

31. For the reading a.šà-le-tu bal.3.kam.ta šuku instead of Scheil’s a.šà-le-tu bal.3.kam ta-din, see De Meyer 1962: 128–29.

twenty-two witnesses, the first being the judge Ahuhutu, their case was adjudicated in the orchard of Šamaš. Aham-arši prevails in the trial. The property, fields on the opposite bank, the house, and (all) bal.3.kam (property), everything that Šin-rabi had given to Nūr-Kabta during the reigns of Temti-Agun and Kuk-Našur, and which, according to his tablet, had been worked on behalf of Ahuhutu, son of Nūr-Kabta, shall be returned. What follows is partly broken, but it is clear that Aham-arši has to do something related to the bal.3.kam sustenance fields and the house.³²

Although the text is only partially preserved, it is clear that we are dealing with a situation similar to that of *MDP* 23 321-2, especially since it is said that property “shall return,” implying it had been taken away previously. As such, a tentative reconstruction can be proposed. At issue is the property of Šin-rabi, including bal.3.kam sustenance fields, fields on the opposite bank, and a house. Šin-rabi gave this property to Nūr-Kabta during the reigns of Temti-Agun and Kuk-Našur, who probably ruled between 1650 and 1600.³³ One of the protagonists of the text is Nūr-Kabta’s son Ahuhutu, implying that the text was written one generation later. It is possible that this Ahuhutu is to be identified with the father of Belī mentioned in *MDP* 23 321-2, a contemporary of Damqīya and Amur-nūršu, belonging to the third generation of the Anih-Šušim family and known to have been active during the reigns of Temti-Agun, Tata, Kuk-Našur II, and Temti-raptaš (see above). This is, however, not certain, since Ahuhutu’s patronymic is not mentioned in *MDP* 23 321-2. If it is the same person, whom we know to have been adopted as a brother by Damqīya and who thus became an adoptive son of Anih-Šušim, Nūr-Kabta must have been his biological father. Note, however, that the first of the twenty-two witnesses before whom the case was decided in the orchard of Šamaš, a judge, is also called Ahuhutu, showing that there were at least two different persons with that name active at that time, since it would have been strange that a party involved would have been the first witness. The other protagonist is Aham-arši, and because Šin-rabi’s property is at issue, it would be logical that he was somehow related to Šin-rabi, but this is not indicated in what is preserved of the text (nor in other texts).

Because the first part of the text is missing, something must have happened before the five witnesses delivered their statement in the orchard of Šamaš. According to what is left of lines 1’–2’a, “the field and house came under his authority (and) he cultivated (it),” and the statement of his five witnesses, it seems that Ahuhutu had to defend himself against a claim concerning a part of Šin-rabi’s property that had come under his authority, after it had earlier been given by Šin-rabi to his father Nūr-Kabta, implying that Nūr-Kabta had died. This claim had probably been lodged by Aham-arši.

32. *MDP* 23 325: 32’b-34’: ‘a-aḥ-mar-šī a-na a.šā-li-ti * bal.3.kam.ta šuku é.dù.a * [. . .]’-e²¹-ma* i-ma-[. . .] *, “Aham-arši, for the bal.3.kam sustenance fields (and) the house . . .” (the signs between * * had been read by Scheil but are now lost). Scheil (1932: 194) restored II. 33’–34’: [ù a.šā i-leq-qé]-e-ma i-ma-[aḥ-ḥa-ar], “he shall take (the house) and field, he shall receive.” This, however, does not make much sense, since I. 32’b clearly reads *ana eqlēti*, “for (or regarding) the fields,” excluding the possibility that the verbs were *ileqqe-ma imahḥar*. It is not possible to restore these lines, especially since this edge of the tablet is now gone.

33. This dating is based on *MDP* 28 14, a letter by Tatta[. . .] to Ulašu in which he states that his grandfather, his father, and he himself worked during the reigns of Sirtuh (probably a scribal error for Siruktuh), Šiwe-palar-huppak, Kudu-zuluš, Kuter-Nahhunte, and Temti-Agun, implying that they ruled during three generations. Šiwe-palar-huppak and Kudu-zuluš were still in office in Ha 26–28 (1671–1669), since they are mentioned in Mari letters (see above), implying that Kuter-Nahhunte and Temti-Agun must have ruled a generation later, ca. 1645. Temti-Agun is mentioned in the oath formula of twenty-two economic and legal texts from Susa, fourteen of which also mention Kuter-Nahhunte and four Kuk-Našur, the second ruler of that name, who refers to himself as the son of Temti-Agun’s sister in *MDP* 23 283 and is thus to be considered one of Temti-Agun’s successors. Hence the tentative date 1650–1600 (see De Graef 2012c).

In the verdict, it is stated that all property given by Sîn-rabi to Nûr-Kabta shall be returned. The question now is from whom to whom it must return. The phrasing is rather ambiguous,³⁴ especially the phrase *ša pī tuppišu ana Ahuhuti mār Nûr-Kabta epšum*, translated by Scheil (*MDP* 23: 195) “according to his tablet, the exploitation returns to Ahuhutu, son of Nûr-Kabta” (“conformément à sa tablette, l’exploitation revient à Ahuhuti, fils de Nur Kabta”), which is problematic on a syntactic level in combination with the preceding *mimma ša*.³⁵ By analogy with *MDP* 23 242 ll. 8: [a field] *ša Qīšti epšu*, “that Qīšti had been cultivating,” and 15–16: [a field] *ša Qīšti ana Temmimi epšum*, “that Qīšti for Temmimi had been cultivating (for him),”³⁶ I propose to interpret *mimma ša PN₁ ana PN₂ ina RN₁ u RN₂ iddinūma ša pī tuppišu ana PN₃ mār PN₂ epšum itâr* as “all that PN₁ gave to PN₂ during the reign of RN₁ and RN₂ and that, according to his tablet, for PN₃ son of PN₂, had been cultivating, shall return,” with *epšum* being the verbal adjective of *epēšum*. This makes sense, since the first preserved lines state that Ahuhutu cultivated the property that came under his authority, or more probably, had it cultivated for him by others. If this holds true, Ahuhutu must have possessed a tablet stating that he had the right to cultivate the property. This tablet must have been mentioned in the missing first part of the text, or this must refer to the statement that the five witnesses made in the orchard of Šamaš that might have been recorded on a tablet.

Whatever the case may have been, because only the middle part of the text is preserved, we do not know what had happened earlier and do not know the final outcome of the case, and as long as the upper half of the tablet is not found, we will remain in the dark. It is, however, clear that this was again a complex case, possibly brought before a higher court due to earlier claims and/or testimonies, which would explain the impression of the seal on the tablet. Exactly as in the case of the Išme-karāb seal, this is not the seal of a particular person, but an official one. The curse formula in the seal inscription resembles that used in royal charters, in which privileges related to landownership, such as freedom from certain legal obligations and retention of ownership in times of redistribution of land, are often granted. This means that it might have been used only in cases regarding ownership of land subject to these privileges. This would explain the mention of rulers in the seal inscription, since the property and privileges involved would have been granted by rulers.

MDP 23 325 can be dated approximately, viz., a generation later than the reigns of Temti-Agun and Kuk-Našur, probably somewhere between 1600 and 1575. This means that, at least in this case, the seal mentioning rulers to be dated ca. 1700 was still in use more than one hundred years later. If *MDP* 23 242 is also to be dated later, viz., between 1570 and 1500 (see above), this means that the only impressions of the seal that have been preserved date from 100–150 years after it was made.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to puzzle out the meaning and function of two very exceptional seals in use during the late Sukkalmah and Kidinuid periods in Susa and Haft Tepe. Both seals have

34. *MDP* 23 325: 28’b–32’a: níg.ga’ a.šà-le-ti šà e-bé-er-ta é.dù.a-tu ù bal.3.kam.ta mi-im-ma šà ¹sîn-gal a-na nu-úr-^dkab.ta’ i-na tem-ti-a-gu-un ù ku-uk-^dna-šu-úr id-di-nu-ú-ma * ¹šà pi-i’ [dub] * ¹šu’ a-na a-hu-hu-ti dumu nu-úr-^dkab.ta * e-ep-¹šum’ [i] * ¹ta’-ar (the signs between * were read by Scheil but are now lost).

35. One would have to translate “the property, fields on the opposite bank, the house, and (all) bal.3.kam (property), everything that Sîn-rabi gave to Nûr-Kabta during the reigns of Temti-Agun and Kuk-Našur, according to his tablet to Ahuhutu, son of Nûr-Kabta the cultivated field shall return,” which makes no sense at all.

36. Obviously *epšum* here should have been *epšu*, “that she had been cultivating,” or *epšūšum*, “that she had been cultivating for him.” Did the scribe intend to add the dative -šum but forgot to write the šu? Or was the subjunctive marker /u/ hardly pronounced, causing the scribe to write *epšum* as it was spoken?

		Seal 1	Seal 2
I	“owner”	Išme-karāb, King of Susa	Inšušinak, King of Susa
	characteristics and deeds	He hated the <i>utukku</i> demon and after he caused him to leave, he gave a seal to Susa to which he gave legal power.	[He . . .] any future king who should remove [. . .]
II	clauses	Should one of parties contest the agreement again, the <i>kidinnu</i> has been touched upon. Whoever shall alter the seal(led tablet) must leave upon the command of Napiriša and Inšušinak and the sceptre of Išme-karāb shall be put upon his head.	[Whoever . . .] must leave upon the command of Sîn, Adad and the great gods and upon the command of Šilhaha, Siruktuh, Šiwe-palar-huppak and Kudu-zuluš.
	impressed on	MDP 23 321-2 HT 21, HTs 24, 295, and 296	MDP 23 242 and 325
	made in	?	ca. 1700 BCE
	used between	ca. 1550–ca. 1400 BCE	?–ca. 1575 BCE
	used in	Susa and Haft Tepe	Susa
	size	42.6 mm height, 22.3 mm diameter	32.6 mm height, 9.5+x mm diameter

Fig. 6. Comparison of Seals 1 and 2.

exceptionally long legends in Akkadian—15 lines and 14+x lines respectively—and were consequently of a considerable size: The first was 42.6 mm high and had a diameter of 22.3 mm; the second was 32.6 mm high and had a diameter of more than 9.5 mm.³⁷ These seals are only known through their impressions on tablets and were both in use over more than one hundred years.

Both seal legends consist of two parts (see Fig. 6), one starting with the name of an Elamite deity—Išme-karāb and Inšušinak, respectively—the “owners” of the seals, and one consisting of penalty and curse clauses resembling those used in the economic and legal texts and royal charters of Susa during the Sukkalmah period.

The Išme-karāb seal has a strong juridical character, referring explicitly to parties in a legal agreement, and the “touching of the *kidinnu*,” an act of commitment performed by both parties in a legal agreement. The legal clauses mentioned are those commonly used in divisions, sales, adoptions, and donations. By mentioning Išme-karāb, escort of the dead to the underworld, and Inšušinak, judge of the dead, it evokes divine judgment. By mentioning Napiriša, god of the capital Anšan, it stresses the unity of the empire and possibly its general legitimacy.

On the basis of the Susa tablet on which it has been impressed, one can conclude that it must have been the official seal of a “Supreme Court.”

37. The legend of the second seal being incomplete, it is impossible to calculate its full size, but with a(n incomplete) circumference of 36 mm, its diameter must have been more than 9.5 mm.

The Inšušinak seal has a more secular and “national” character since, similar to the royal charters, in the curse formula it mentions four important Elamite rulers, among them the illustrious predecessor Šilhaha.

On the basis of the Susa tablets on which it was impressed, a verdict related to the *mê leqûm* procedure that a litigant underwent within the framework of a claim on the proceeds of land, and a litigation concerning the ownership of land, including sustenance land, that had earlier been given out in order to be cultivated, and on the basis of the royal charters, which often concern privileges related to landownership granted by rulers, I have proposed that this seal belonged to a legal body authorized to deal with claims regarding land subject to these privileges.

In any case, it is clear that neither seal belonged to an individual official, but both were seals of a judicial or administrative body.

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